

The Hurricane of Terror and Trauma of Students': A Critical Analysis of December 1st, 2014 Boko Haram Attack on Damaturu

By:

Shehu Nasiru Muhammad

Department of Islamic Studies, Jigawa State College of Islamic and Legal Studies, Ringim

Jigawa State, Nigeria, shehunasiru117@gmail.com , +2348136698206

Muhammad Mahmud

M.Sc. Student, International Institute of Islamic Banking and Finance
Bayero University, Kano

A paper to be presented at International Conference on Insurgency and the Phenomenon

of Boko Haram in Nigeria, 13th – 15th November, 2018

Organized by Centre for Islamic Civilization and Interfaith Dialogue

Bayero University, Kano

&

International Institute of Islamic Thought, Nigeria

Abstract:

It's very hard to forget horrific and tragic moments particularly when it threatens your life. The December 1st, 2014 was the day where the thunderstorm descended and hurricane of carnage blown, the mind was terrified and terrorized, indeed it was full of all sort of displeasures, miseries and traumas. This article is a narration of how a systematized attack and invasion of Damaturu city of Yobe State was carried out, not this alone but visualizing vivid scenes of what happened to the Students' of Yobe State University, the trauma they went in and the barbarity they confronted. the paper explores the negligence of security forces on taking proactive majors (in those days) on security leakages since it has been circulated within the people that, there would be a conquest on December 1st, the paper concludes by giving recommendation on government and individuals should join hands together in fighting the menace of terror not Boko Haram alone but all peace threatening movement and scholar should double their effort on enlightenment and promulgating the true teachings of Islam.

Keywords: Hurricane, Terror, Trauma, Students, Damaturu and Boko Haram.

Introduction

Nigeria, like many developing countries in Africa, has been confronted with diverse forms of security challenges since it gained its independence in 1960. Starting from when the military handed over power to a democratically elected government in 1999 till date, the security situation has continued to be a nightmare. Prominent among the causes of the deteriorating security condition in the country is the activities of the Boko Haram insurgent sect in the north-eastern part of the country. Boko Haram, a Nigerian jihadist sect, publicly commenced its operation in 2002 and has become a significant

security threat to the Nigerian state and its neighboring countries through its indiscriminate attacks on civilians, security agencies, destruction of public and private properties, and kidnappings. Amusan, L. & Patience, U. E. (2017).

In 2014, thousands of people were killed through bomb blasts, gun shots, arson and other violent attacks from the group while over 250 high school female students at Chibok Girls High School in Borno state were kidnapped (Aliyu, Moorthy, & Idris, 2015). Between January to December of 2014 Boko Haram undertake several attacks among which are; Buru Yadi Federal Government College where 29 adolescents' boys were killed, over 88 people dead in a twin bombing attack in Abuja, kidnapping of 250 Chibok girls' students, Boko Haram destroyed the town of Damboa, Assassination of Idrissa Timta, the Emir of Gwoza in Borno and Damaturu massacre. (Amusan, L. & Patience, U. E., 2017). Despite the security measures deployed by the Nigerian state and its surrounding countries to respond to Boko Haram insurgencies, the sect remains capable of initiating significant attacks.

This study is an attempt to give a narrative account on December 1st, 2014 organized invasion of Boko Haram on the City of Damaturu and psychological trauma faced by the students of Yobe State University. This article is a narration of how a systematized attack and invasion of Damaturu city of Yobe State was carried out, not this alone but visualizing vivid scenes of what happened to the Students' of Yobe State University, the trauma they went in and the barbarity they confronted. the paper explores the negligence of security forces on taking proactive majors (in those days) on security leakages.

Research methodology

The methods adopted for this study are qualitative, descriptive and critical content analysis. The study was carried out through meta-analysis of psychological trauma as regards violence inflicted by Boko Haram in Damaturu (Capital city of Yobe State, Nigeria). Content analysis approach was

employed to conduct analysis of relevant secondary data relating to psychological trauma effects. The reviewed sources include data collected from published textbooks, online data sources, scholarly journals, articles, YouTube clips, online news outfits, reports and newspapers. This paper employs a very high degree of narrative case analysis.

Results and Discussion

This section covers findings on, and analyses of the Boko Haram invasion of the city of Damaturu and psychological trauma faced by the university students, these shall be examined under the following sub-headings: The Boko Haram, December 1st, 2014: Forces of scourge and Invasion of Damaturu, Psychological trauma, Psychological impacts of Boko Haram (invasion) on students', Vanquished by the hurricane of terror, illogical logic of security forces, conclusion and recommendations.

The Book Haram

Adewunmi, J. F. (2017) have adopted Vanguard (2011) study on the Arabic name of Boko Haram, is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad ("People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad.") The group became best known by its Hausa name 'Boko Haram'. It was a local radical Salafist movement which morphed into a Salafi-jihadist terrorist organization after 2009.

Walker, A. (2012) examines Boko Haram an Islamic sect that believes politics in northern Nigeria has been seized by a group of corrupt, false Muslims. It wants to wage a war against them, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria generally, to create a "pure" Islamic state ruled by sharia law. Human Right Watch (2012) Boko Haram's origins are central to the group's self-definition and justification of violent tactics used to fight Nigeria's government and perceived allies.

Dominic, U. (2015). defines Boko Haram as a Nigerian Islamic extremist group which has caused a lot of havoc in the country through waves of violence: bombings, assassinations, abductions and rape in an attempt to overthrow the government and to create an Islamic state. The group's havoc has spread over to other neighboring countries around Nigeria and apparently very soon beyond. Its followers are said to be influenced by the phrase in the Koran quoted as "Anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors." And Allah has not "revealed" western civilization, democracy, technology and all that go with it.

Etymologically, the word "Boko" is of Hausa origin which lexically means fake, (Joinet, 2000) but in this context came to signify Western or non-Islamic education, while the term "Haram" is an Arabic word translated "forbidden" or "prohibited" or the rejection of an idea or something as untenable. In Hausa, Boko Haram translates that "Western education is sinful", it is corrupting to Muslims and therefore, should be prohibited; forbidden or abrogated (Dominic, U., 2015).

Elden (2014) consider Boko Haram as a controversial Nigerian extremist Islamic group that seeks to impose Sharia law in the northern part of Nigeria. The group originated in Maiduguri in Borno State, located in northeast Nigeria, around 2002. It started as a small group founded by Mohammed Yusuf. The group established an Islamic school in Maiduguri from where they operated. The group's message of Islamic Radicalism drew the attention of prominent Islamic scholars in the region, who challenged Boko Haram's interpretation of the Quran. Subsequently, the group relocated from Maiduguri in 2004 to a remote village called Kanamma in Yobe State where they formed a base and named it Afghanistan. Gradually Boko Haram increased in their numbers as Mohammed Yusuf attracted people who were mostly school dropouts, unemployed, and disgruntled. The Boko Haram Jihadist group shared a common ideology (jihadist) with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Al-Qaeda groups operating in the Sahara and Sahel region.

Dominic, U. (2015) studied (BBC Africa, 2015) argument on how Boko Haram promotes a version of Islam which makes it "haram", or forbidden, for Muslims to take part in any political or social activity associated with western society. This includes voting in elections, wearing shirts and trousers or receiving a secular education. Boko Haram regards the Nigerian state as being run by non-believers, even when the country had a Muslim president - and it has extended its military campaign by targeting neighboring states.

Under the guise of Islam, Boko Haram carried out its radicalization activities without interruption for about seven years. During this period, the group was considered peaceful, as there were no major provocation between it and the Nigerian government. However, the group isolated itself from the Muslim population, who did not share their ideology. A series of intelligence and security reports were forwarded to the government as Boko Haram gradually became more violent and anti-government. It was learned that the group was arming itself at this stage. In July 2009, Boko Haram clashed with Nigerian security forces, which resulted in the death of some of Boko Haram members in Bauchi State northern Nigeria. This led to the arrest of Mohammed Yusuf, the group's leader, who was later executed by the Nigeria Police Force while in their custody. Human Right Watch (2012)

December 1st, 2014: Forces of scourge and Invasion of Damaturu

On the dawn of Monday December 1st, 2014 a systematized conquest was carried out in the state capital of Yobe State, Damaturu. Damaturu witnessed a barbaric, terrible, monstrous and heavy attack of nine hours and a half by the mutineers of BH, which resulted the downfall of many peoples, the State Government House was horribly invaded, University vehicles were stolen, mobile police base was devastated, Road safety office was burnt, CID office was also bombed and many more of governmental properties. Nevertheless, the casualties are numerous to be oversimplified.

Damaturu inhabitants were living in fear and caution as they witnessed BH's merciless massacre of 29 adolescent boys of Federal Government College, Buni Yadi in 25 February, 2014 (Amusan, L. & Patience, U. E., 2017). Buni Yadi is a close village to the city of Damaturu which is not more than 29 kilo meters away from the city. The researcher argues that, the idea of invasion of Damaturu followed after the successful invasion of Mubi town of Adamawa State. Therefore, troops of battalion armies of terror descended the city of Damaturu with their newly appointed governor, after dawn prayer with few moments, two consecutive gunshots were heard from the third gate of Yobe State University, after then the downpour of tragic shoots overwhelmed the city.

As the systematic and coordinated the conquest was, some troops were position in different places in order to counter the attacks of security forces, while the anointed governor with his cabinet aimed the government house. At inception, mobile police base which is at entrance of the city and by right side of the university was the first place to be brutally and horribly massacred and bombed. It was said, a day before the conquest forty police were deployed to that base, which mostly if not all were killed during the attack.

In the areas where security check points were place, most of them converge to the nearest point in order to counter the insurgents, which mostly were defeated and killed. Nevertheless, in the case of the inhabitants, majority of them decided to flee for their lives, which must of them were able to scale while some were hampered and killed particularly in the exit of Damaturu along Potiskum road. Comparatively, those decided to remain indoors some were killed by accidental bullets shoot outside, while some, their houses were ridden by the insurgents, broke their doors, tied them up and drag them out and got killed outdoors.

Areas like red-bridge ignorant of what is happening the town, it was voice of America Radio, BBC Hausa notify them, something terrible is currently happening. Some prominent people, government officials and security

personnel were tagged to be arrested and killed, some got killed while some scale the carnage. A systematized invasion of nine and a half hours which brought the security forces on their knees, which almost the control of town to be in the hands of mutineers. In other hand, the newly anointed governor with his cabinet forcefully pulled the security and aimed the government house.

Fortunately, two aircrafts of Nigeria Air Force overshadowed the sky of the town and disarrayed the insurgent with wrath explosive bombs, mutineer's governor and his people were knock down at the entrance of government house. Precisely and drastically, forces of scourge were countered and defeated, the remaining juvenile ones were captured and detained, the security forces took over the control of the city, the invasion was countered and spoiled.

Psychological trauma

Trauma, a Greek word means wound, originating from the verb *titrosko* which means to pierce, literally this would mean a mark, the injury left behind as a result of a skin being pierced. Therefore, trauma is the reaction of an overwhelming stress that surpasses an individual ability to cope, or assimilate the emotions involved with the experience. Trauma affects the individual, group, society physically, cognitively, emotionally and spiritually (Yoder, 2015). Generally, individuals exposed to traumatic events usually exhibit emotional stress, which often is psychological in nature. The main characteristics of traumatic events are intense fear, loss of control, helplessness, terror, a threat to one's life or bodily integrity, close personal encounter with death and evoking devastating responses (Yoder, 2015). It is caused by varieties of events such as kidnapping, sexual abuse, security agents' brutality, bullying, war, natural disasters and domestic violence. While experiences of violence, war, kidnapping and political violence are often experienced as traumatic, not all individuals exposed to a particular traumatic event would be psychologically traumatized. Some individuals, for some

reasons, do not experience psychological trauma during violent events (Yoder, 2015). Yoder argues further in her book called 'Trauma Healing' that whether or not a situation is overwhelming cannot be determined by looking only at the events; according to her, what overwhelms and traumatizes an individual or a group might merely be stressful to another depending on some factors, (e.g. age, meaning given to the event, quality of social networks, genetic makeup, previous history and knowledge on coping with trauma).

Amusan, L. & Patience, U. E. (2017) examines Reyes, Elhai, and Ford (2008) study where they viewed psychological trauma as the nature of the stress, evaluation of that stress by the individual, as well as the immediate and the after effects of the stressor on that individual. Psychological trauma is therefore a damage to the psyche, which happens because of a distressing event. Psychological trauma is included in Diagnostic Statistic Manual for mental health (DSM-III) in 1980 and was recognized as a diagnosis for the very first time. This led to the inclusion of a Diagnostic criterion for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), according to the diagnostic criteria for PTSD (DSM-IV-TR, 2015) there are three distinct persistent post-traumatic symptoms experienced by individual exposure to traumatic events which include: intrusion (re-experiencing of the traumatic event after it has occurred that often breaks into flashbacks and nightmares); constriction (numbness and distortion from reality), and hyper-arousal symptoms (startled easily, poor sleep and irritability). These symptoms may be acute (lasting for less than three months) or chronic (lasting longer periods, even decades) (Subramaniam, 2015).

Psychological impacts of Boko Haram on students'

To analyze the psychological trauma faced by the students' of Yobe State University numerous things has to be taken in to account, first of all students were living in catastrophic fear since the BH wage war against institutions and legitimized the killings, abduction, enslaving and selling of students (not students alone but general populace who decline to adhere to their dictates).

Considering the fact that, more than twenty-nine boys of Buni Yadi Government College were massacred in February threw the students in overwhelming fear of hurricane of terror which vanquish its target and whatever stands on its path.

Secondly, some papers have been found in the Federal Polytechnics Damaturu with letter headed of BH that, they will come to burn the institution. I did not see the letters and I have never seen the one who have sighted the paper, all I knew it was a rumor and speculations, however it happened in the University after the rumor of Federal Poly that a letter was pasted on mosque notice board with the same content. Therefore, spreading terror upcoming attack through rumor and speculation became a tradition, likewise the dreadful invasion of December was transmitted in the same process and nobody knows the authenticity of the news.

Thirdly, some series of tragic incidences has happened which terrorized the students, terrified the peaceful atmosphere of the university, the wound is still wet and mind is confused. But the December invasion was horrific and unique in terms of confrontation and counter-confrontation in a guerilla warfare form of nine and a half hours. With mountain of fear in the mind, after the first gunshot everybody flee without knowing a specific direction to go or a placed to hide, those in toilet for the call of nature all move out naked, those were sleeping wake up unconsciously, and indeed the utmost screaming, moaning from girls' hostel would halt the fear to sympathize for them, the attack was thought to be for the abduction for the girls only. Unknowingly, it was for the whole town.

Fourthly, the invasion happened when the students were in the midst of exams, and this resulted in inflicting psychological trauma, fear and disruption even after the normalcy of the situation. Therefore, university senate has agreed that, students to resume back after two weeks to continue with their exams and this amount most students to end up with poor or

unworthy result. While some could not get strength to resume back in that fixed period.

Then, those students with deadly diseases; i.e bronchial asthma, hypertension among others, were found to be in miserable and unhelp condition as the resonance of terror scattered the students. However, parents in the home whom got allowed by network to communicate with their children via phones were in unending disheartening, likewise the children. But those couldn't reach out to their children, or those students whom were hamper to communicate with their parents were in much quandary.

Vanquished by the hurricane of terror

After the dawn prayer and morning invocations, I resumed back to hostel as usual, climbed my upper bed pace and started watching a video clip on YouTube. Suddenly, we heard a gunshot, a brother and roommate Abdul'aziz whose bed was close to the door was the first person to moved out from the room instantly, unnoticeably.

You don't know how much fear was casted in my mind, perhaps I was thinking it's my time to die, I know it was them unwanted, unwelcomed and vulnerable visitors. Terribly enough, gunshots continued increasing, students from upstairs were descending, jumping rapidly, some were even in the toilet for the call of nature, whilst some were bathing, all moved out naked.

We run to the side of house of the Registrar which is at the north side of our hostel, we gathered over there, please come see overzealous, comrade students moaning, groaning and screaming because of the fear of horror. Furthermore, mobile police base which is neibouring our University by north was surrounded by them, they climbed the fence of the base and lunched many rockets, bombs. Before that, mobile police base has witnessed several attacks by insurgents, but this one was the devastating assault.

Within a face of minute, the town of Damaturu was full of thunderstorm and ferocity, destructive and massive explosion of bombs in police stations (and other governmental properties), persistent sound of rockets, missiles, rain of bullets and resonance of nuclear weapons. It was merciless, inhuman and ungodly combat. We were terrified and frightened, we even thought they came for the abduction of the girls, we summoned strength, courage to run back to the hostel again, we met girls all were out and screaming around the male hostel, I rushed to the room and wore my slippers, cloth because we almost moved out half-naked.

Vehemently, most if not all of the girls were necked, they were screaming, crying for the balcony. Gunshots were disarray and approaching from there we scattered to convocation square which is at the down of the university. Everybody was running, but I couldn't run as much as I could, despite the miserable situation I was in, my body was weakened, beaten up by fear of monster; I passed one girl who was incapacitated to run, she grasped my legs begging me to carry her on my back, I doesn't even look at her, I just pulled her down and continue running, as you know nobody will carry a sick man on his back when going to war, sigh! wallahi you may think it's the day of the resurrection. Come see valiant, gallant soldiers running with us, university securities as well.

I was looking for the safe-hiding place, thus, it maybe I will never finish my degree program, let alone to transmit this narration to you. Unambiguously, I recited all what I knew would be helpful and protection for me against the insurgents. Nevertheless, my cell phone rang, quickly I put it on vibration, it was my course mate from the town, I picked the call and he was saying 'the city is on fire, run for your life, find a dark place to hide. I was able to crossed the school wall and reached the nearest village to the school where I saw watchdogs, whistle blowers of horror at the entrance of Damaturu by the south along Buniyadi road, ultimately I have no option other than to turn back and look for the exit.

Calls from different angles; family, mentors, colleagues, relatives among others, unfortunately, I was unable to communicate with my parents due to the network perambulation, my mother thought I was wounded or even killed, but father held the view that I'm still alive, he even calmed them down and convinced them to immensely supplicated for my rescue, sincerely from the bottom of his heart he has doubt about the certainty of my life. However, the scenario deteriorated to the vertex, I summoned courage to climb the school wall again for the refuge, unexpectedly I met dear colleagues; Aliyu Jibo, Abdullahi Ahmed Ibrahim, Hadiza Ishaku Ado among the others hiding under thatch, perhaps they were shocked when they heard me approaching, they recognized me and called my name, I looked up and down, east, west, north and south but unfortunately I saw no body, my heart starts beating rapidly, my chum Jibo whispered his voice here are we, Alhamdulillah we were narrowly escaped but we were wounded mentally and psychologically.

The illogical logic of Security forces

The researcher considers the logicity of security forces as illogical of not taking necessary proactive majors against December invasion. They might take some majors but reasonably if it happens they took any major it did not work. However, the rumor of December conquest will not be taken for granted, as the saying goes; in every rumor there is an element of truth. Nevertheless, the fleeing of top government officials from the town will testify the authenticity of the rumor, it was confirmed that, the Governor, SSG, Speaker, House of Assembly members, Commissioners and many more were absent during the tragedy with exception of deputy governor.

Conclusion and recommendation

Boko Haram catastrophic terrorism problem that needs quick response, due to its significant effects on the health, education and welfare of the people. Conflicts could be better solved when their causes are addressed. The growth and development of any particular state requires tranquility and

harmony. Therefore, government needs to critically look into the reasons for the emergence of Boko haram and close such gaps.

The safety and security of Nigerian people need to be reassured, the fundamental human rights of all citizens must be the government's watch word. With regard to affected students, therapeutic programs intended to meet their psychosocial needs should be developed ahead of time and timely by trained clinical psychologists, taking into consideration the contextual, cultural and experiences of the victims.

References

1. Adewunmi, J. F. (2016). The nature of Nigeria's Boko Haram war, 2010-2015: A strategic analysis, *perspectives on terrorism*, Volume 10, Issue 1, ISSN 2334-3745.
2. Aliyu, A., Moorthy, R., & Idris, N. A. B. (2015). Towards understanding the Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria. *Asian Social Science*, 11(10), 307.
3. Amusan, L. & Patience, U. E. (2017). The psychological trauma inflicted by Boko Haram insurgency in the north eastern Nigeria, *aggression and violent behavior* 36 (2017) 52-59
4. Bamidele, O. (2012). Boko Haram catastrophic terrorism -an albatross to national peace, security and sustainable development in Nigeria, *journal of sustainable development in Africa*, Volume 14, No.1, ISSN: 1520-5509.
5. Dominic, U. (2015). The illogical logic of Nigerian Boko Haram, *sky journal of educational research*, Vol. 3(6), pp. 067 - 077, October, 2015. Available

online <http://www.skyjournals.org/SJER> , ISSN 2354-4406 ©2015 Sky Journals

6. Human Right Watch (2012). *Spiraling violence: Boko Haram attacks and security force Abuses in Nigeria, printed in the United States of America*, ISBN: 1-56432-951-8.
7. Mahmoud, O. (2018). Local, global, or in between? Boko Haram's messaging, strategy, membership, and support networks, pp 87- 114 in Zenn, J. (Ed.), *Boko Haram Beyond the headlines: Analyses of Africa's enduring insurgency*, combating terrorism center, U.S. Military academy.
8. Olukayode, J. A. (2015). Examining the Boko Haram insurgency in northern Nigeria and the quest for a permanent resolution of the crisis, *global journal of arts, humanities and social sciences*, Vol.3, No.8, pp.32-45, ISSN: 2052-6350(Print) ISSN: 2052-6369(Online).
9. Walker, A. (2012). *What is Boko Haram*, special report to United States institute of peace, 2301 Constitution Ave., NW • Washington, DC 20037 • 202.457.1700 • fax 202.429.6063
10. Yoder, C. (2015). *Little book of trauma healing: When violence strike and community security is threatened*. Inc: Skyhorse Publishing.
11. Zubairu, S. A. (2017). A critical analysis of Boko Haram insurgency, a thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Master of military art and science, general studies.